133 Plain where lie the coal districts of the Ukraine. The more bleak and unfriendly this industrial country with its black chimneys appears to you, the friendlier the quiet, pale yellow Donets beckons yonder, with its broad, green valley and the white chalk precipices crowned by dark green forests. Now your journey takes you south to the Sea of Azov, across the mouth of the Don to the Caucasian foothills. Immeasurable fields of sun-
101 flowers accompany you into this "second Ukraine". 1
133 Here you feel the refreshing breath of the snowy mountains of the Caucasus. You are on the shores of the Argonauts. Virile and full of strength is this untouched land at the foot of the Elbrus. Like the mountains, the people, too, are giants. You have before you the descendants of the flower of the Ukrainian people, of the Zaporogian Cossacks who were settled here by Catherine II.

137 [133] And now turn west, start homeward! The way leads across the Pontic Plain which extends north of the Black Sea as far as the Danube. On this "racial meadow" you will look in vain for the much-praised wild uncultivated steppe. You are in the land of Taras Bulba. Gogol, a Ukrainian, erected an imperishable monument to the bold Cossack in his tale. /21/ In those days the grass and shrubs of the steppe grew taller than a man, but today you will find only the knee-high herbs of the temporarily fallow fields, and here and there a thicket of wild cherries, mahaleb and thistles. Perhaps you will also come to one of those meadows that have become rare, which in a brief whiff of spring changes its color like a rich woman her clothes, wrapping itself in silver gray during the summer, and adorning itself in moss-green in autumn, when rain finally quenches the cracked earth. Smooth
133 and flat, amorphous as a calm sea, the Pontic Steppe stretches out before you. Burial mounds as
● 764 large as houses, called kurgany, point the way to the Dniestr. What ghastly secrets may they not

1 [i.e. the Caucasian foothills — Analyst]

harbor! Some kurgany were opened and Scythian princes were found who had taken with them under the earth a retinue of more than 200 riders on horseback and in full armor.

You must not overlook the Crimean Peninsula, the Tauris of the Greeks! You pass through a narrow isthmus and find yourself on the Peninsula. Gradually the steppe mounts up to the Yaila Range from the peaks of which daring roads climb down the steep coast to the blue-green Black Sea. Crimea, ancient land of the Tatar! Christ was driven out of the Ukraine; but Mohammed has entrenched himself under the flat roofs of these Tatar villages and cities, in order to receive the prayers of his believers when the sun flames up over the Caucasus or sinks across Bessarabia. Thus southern Crimea with its Tatars, its marble palaces of past Russian grandeur, its groves of olives, mulberries and figs, and its Bolshewik sanatariums, leads a special existence which, in its timeless diversity, will affect you strangely.

The mouth of the Dniepr is behind you and Odessa lies in front of you. Catherine II, the great colonizer, erected this city on the bare ground of the steppe. The yellow shell-limestone coast drops steeply into the sea. Straight as a die, quite after the modern European pattern, the third largest city of Ukraine /22/ is laid out. You will miss trees and parks and perhaps you will say it is a cold heap of stones. You forget that Odessa in summer does not have enough water for its inhabitants to drink. The earth is saline and rain extremely sparse.

There are still fifty kilometers separating you from the Rumanian border. Beyond the Dniestr you are on Bessarabian soil, and here, too, you will meet Ukrainians. Travel up the imperceptibly rising Bessarabian plain between the Dniestr and the Prut, in the course of which you repeatedly touch on Rumanian soil, and you will reach green Bukovina where the hospitable Huzul will present